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1961-11-26, Bette to Parents

Bette J. Barto

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Subject Terms

Women and the military, Women and war, United States -- Air Force, United States -- Army -- Air Forces, Photographs, Armed Forces -- Correspondence, Correspondence -- Vietnam War -- 1961-1975, Christmas

Summary

This collection contains 139 correspondence from Maj. Bette J. Barto, USAFE to her parents while serving as a nurse during the late 1950s and 1960s. Also included are three photographs, one special orders document, and one marriage license. In several cases, Bette refers to her parents as "Lizzie" and "Hugh Elmer," or simply "Elmer." Three letters from 1961 or 1962 are undated and placed in a separate folder.

Keywords

1961-11-26

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Sunday afternoon
26 November 1961.

Dear Mom and Daddy,

We've been watching the football game on T.V. and I feel as if I'm tied to the front of the set!

Ray has been having jaw pain with accompanying joint pains in his arms, shoulders and legs. Finally he began to have several loose jaw teeth. Friday morning after a sleepless night with toothache he went on dental sick call and they x-rayed all his teeth. He was told he'd have to loose 5 jaw teeth (4 that day); so he was scheduled for the extraction at 2³⁰pm. They gave him Nembutal 30 min. before they gave him 4-5 shots of xylocaine. The dental surgeon extracted one upper + 3 lower jaw teeth on his left side. He scraped the bone and cleaned all the overridding gum tissue away, then he put in 5-6 sutures to help stop bleeding. I got off duty long enough to bring him home, and then had to go back for an hour. He was real good about staying indoors, and even did without cigarettes until the next morning. He couldn't eat until yesterday, and then only soft foods!

He did real well; kept an ice bag on, and had very little swelling or real pain. He isn't supposed to fly until Tuesday and goes back Wednesday for suture removal. He will then be scheduled for removal of the other bad tooth. The dentist said he wouldn't have had to loose the teeth if he had had partials put in when he had some teeth pulled 10 years ago. These teeth had had nothing to bite against for 10 years; so they became separated from the jaw & gums and were just rotting in place, distributing poison throughout his system.

We've been busy writing the Santa letters for the kids. I'll mail them in a day or two - dead line is 15 December. I didn't say anything specific about gifts. I hope it fools Jell & Joel & makes Jeff wonder if his friends are right about 'no Santa'. I'm sure Mary Ann will get a thrill out of it, if Adam doesn't goof up and say it "looks like yore Aunt Belle's hand writin'".

I spent most of yesterday making out a shopping order for Christmas gifts for everyone - except Ray - got to wait 'til he's not so nosy! He says "who's nosy?"

I got Helen a set of corduroy slacks & a matching rayon & wool blouse (black) to wear

around the house. I'm afraid to try a dress, Mom, because she's hard to fit. If you still want me to look, though, I'll surely try.

We decided Jody needed a new robe; so we got a lovely white Terry cloth one by Martex. His old one looked pretty bad when we visited. For Jill, I selected a cute little green top & red plaid pants. The top buttons down the back & is trimmed in the red plaid. For Mary Ann I got a 3 pc. cordurey set (a little white blouse, red cordurey vest & pants). For Joel, I got cordurey pants & matching plaid flannel shirt (the pants are lined with the same flannel). For Jeff I got a 4-piece Aluminum cook-out set & a set of knife, fork & spoon in a separate case. I hope you haven't got that, too. Don't you go spending a lot of money on us, Mom, because we don't need anything - especially, don't go overboard on silver; it's so expensive! We can wait and we are ^{NOT} going hungry & our stainless steel!

Before I forget it again, Mom, do you still have that old hunting knife Uncle Carl sent from the I.Pacific? If you do, could we have it - you remember the one with the colored plastic handle made from airplane parts?

As killing Ray to stay indoors, it's been just lovely both yesterday and today, cool but sunny, but I felt he'd be better off

to be extra careful with all these gaping holes in his mouth.

I'm about to run out of soft food ideas. We've had potato soup, macaroni & cheese, poached eggs - so I guess I'll feed him Turkey hash or something tonight. Maybe he'll be able to chew a bit more by tomorrow.

The way things stand now, we can't come to see you before the middle of January & maybe not even then. I have Sat.²³, Sun.²⁴, Mon.²⁵ (Christmas) off, but I'm on call the entire weekend - the Chief nurse and I are the only two nurses to pull call for all of December & 1/2 January. One of the Captains got her discharge & left last week and Nancy, the other one, is going to visit her husband in Alaska from 5 December to 5 January, so that leaves me & Cal. Marge to rotate Nurse-of-the-Day on the weekends. Ordinarily you don't have to go to the hospital, but you have to be at a phone all the time, so I can't leave. We wish you could come over here for Christmas. How about it?

More later;

Love you,
Betty